

TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME OF JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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A Priestly Spirit (Part IV)

I think we have argued the point sufficiently that the community of the church has the authority to define her priesthood. In the primary text that has been chosen by the diocese for her New Testament class in the Deacon's program, it is written: "It is possible that in places where Paul had a relatively brief stay, he recognized the need to leave behind a more formal structure, whereas in places where he had a longer time to form the community (Corinth), Paul was inclined to leave the assignment of roles to the Spirit through charisms." (*An Introduction to the New Testament, Raymond Brown, p. 524*) In other words, where the faith was undeveloped more supervision was required, but where it was given a chance to mature Paul relied less on supervision and more on the Spirit's inspiration.

If we take a look at Paul's most developed writing, his Epistle to the Romans, he speaks of our unity in Christ as church. He lists various graces offered in the Spirit including ministry, teaching, exhortation and leadership (12:5-8). These pastoral responsibilities are shared by the whole community because the community is sufficiently aware of the Spirit. If we read the church's earliest history, the Acts of the Apostles, we hear repeated reference to the shared authority structure of the community (12:17; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 21:18).

Within this shared-authority structure, there are women: Phoebe is a deacon, Prisca is an evangelist and Junia is an apostle. (Rom. 16:1, 3, 7) Silence is also informative. In the Epistle that most explicitly describes the Eucharist, there is no teaching in 1 Corinthians on church order as such. There are no *elders*, *overseers* or *deacons*. There is no mention as to who is to lead the Lord's Supper. Instead, explicit provision is made so that everyone can participate in the liturgy, and the purpose of this is so that all may be "built-up." It is even argued that since a Corinthian congregation met in the home of Chloe that she would have served as the presider at worship, the priest in other words. Openness and equality were signs of the Spirit and the spiritual in the earliest church.

The earliest church struggled mightily to ingrain within her members the radical equality of the new faith. This comes across clearly in the wonderful Letter to Philemon, but it is also found in the short, possibly baptismal, words: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27-28) How radical this notion is becomes clear when in the Deutero-Pauline Epistle to the Colossians the same theme is recorded minus the notion of gender equality (3:11). After the reforming enthusiasm of Paul, conservatism replaced inspiration and the social mores of the world intruded into the community of the church.

The pristine church was egalitarian, but she has become a bastion of gender inequality, the first steps of which we can even witness in the biblical text itself as noted above. This is profoundly expressed in the belief that the priestly spirit can only be found in a male body. The Christian priesthood emerged during the Roman Empire and continued to evolve during the reign of monarchs. We should not be surprised, therefore, by a history of hierarchy and male-centeredness. However, we have moved beyond such a society; we now embrace democracy and equality. The world outside of the church once infringed on the Christian ideal of radical equality within the church. Now for the church to stubbornly maintain the effects of that intrusion even after the worldly society outside the church has left it behind is a terribly sad irony.

Soren Kierkegaard once wrote that we understand backward but live forward. This discrepancy can breed defiance. For example, the etymology of the word *female* is derived from the Latin word to suckle a child. Karen Jo Torjesen in *When Women Were Priests* offers instead that it comes from the Latin for *faith-less*, that women have less faith than men. (p. 232) Where no insult is intended, they are now invented. There is the perception of a conscious effort to try and impugn women. The radical equality of the earliest church has been inverted, and people can wonder why. ...

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

- September 1, 2007 – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am.
- September 2nd – Polish Mass will be recited at 7:45am.
- Monthly meeting of the Parish United Youth Association at 10:00am.
- September 7th – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.
- September 9th – **FEAST OF BROTHERLY LOVE.**
Special collection for the Manor at Waymart, PA, previously known as Spojnia Manor.
- September 10th – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall at 7:00pm.
- September 11th – Monthly meeting of the Parish Committee at 7:00pm.
- September 16th – School of Christian Living classes begin for the new academic year at 10:00am.
- September 20th – Diocesan Clergy Conference in Fall River, MA
- September 22nd – Diocesan SOCL Seminar in Central Falls, RI.
- September 23rd – Spojnia Sunday. Prayers offered for our church's fraternal organization.
- September 24th – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall at 7:00pm.
- September 29th – Organizational meeting of the First Holy Communion catechism class at 10:00am.
- Bp. Francis Hodur was consecrated on this date in 1907 by the Old Catholics in Utrecht, Holland.
- September 30th – Monthly meeting of the Adoration Society at 10:00am.

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“Confidence comes not from always being right, but from not fearing to be wrong.” – Peter McIntyre

FEAST OF BROTHERLY LOVE

This is one of the unique feast day celebrations of our church, and one for which we should be most proud. The day was established by an act of the Special Synod of 1906. We have spoken of this many times in the past so I will not go into detail. The 1906 Synod had to be convened due to serious threats to the integrity of our church both from outside of the denomination and surprisingly from inside, as well. Our church had not yet even celebrated the anniversary of her first decade. We could have faced dissolution easily. We would

only be a brief notation in the history books of Catholic reform movements. The 1906 Synod faced this very real possibility forth right.

Along with the necessary discipline matters at hand, the Synod did not allow the church to be defined only by the negative. We rose above the threats and the opprobrium. In this way we not only defended ourselves; we defined ourselves by higher ideals. When we were forced to come together in Synod because of the attacks of others, we dealt with it in a practical fashion, but we also established the Feast of Brotherly Love.

Drawing upon the parable of the Good Samaritan, the example held out by Jesus of what it means to “love thy neighbour,” we professed that we would emphasize our community, our brotherhood, with all people, even the ones who held us in derision and hoped for our failure.

The Lesson chosen for this Feast Day Mass is from the First Epistle of St. John and it speaks of the fact that we cannot love the God we have not seen if we cannot love the neighbour we do see. The way we live our lives provides the evidence of our faith. If we believe in a Saviour who taught us to love our enemies, then we could not simply return insult for insult. We had to rise above such inclinations, thus the Feast of Brotherly Love.

This feast day will be forever pertinent. We always need to remember this lesson, and we always need to recall the higher standards that our young church set for us. I hope that we will all choose to gather on September 9th as we celebrate the Feast of Brotherly Love.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our Bible study group has been meeting since just after Easter and throughout the summer. We will continue to meet through the end of October. Two months is worth the effort of joining us late in our season. We are continuing our reading of Old Testament history, and I would bet that some of the things we discuss would surprise you. Why not come for our last two months, see what you think of our Bible study, try and gain a new perspective on the revealed Word of God, and maybe you will even read the Bible on your own throughout the winter and decide to join us again in the spring.

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING CLASSES

Our SOCL classes will begin on September 16th. A letter will be shared with our young families at

the end of August. We are hoping to offer classes from pre-school through Confirmation-age. To do so we need four volunteers to teach our students. Presently, we have only two. We need a teacher for the pre-school class and the Confirmation-age class. This is a substantial commitment of time and effort to your church and her youth. We meet on Sundays after church most every week from mid-September through mid-June. But there are also rewards. I still remember my SOCL teachers from when I was a child in Westfield. Maybe you remember yours as well. A teacher can make a difference in a young person's religious development, and that may make the commitment seem like a reasonable offering to the parish.

If you could be one of our four teachers, please speak with Fr. Calvo in the nearest future. Thank you.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CATECHISM

Our First Holy Communion catechism class will begin on Saturday, September 29th at 10:00am. This is only the organizational meeting. At this time I will need to have parents and students present. We will discuss among ourselves when is the best time to meet for our catechism classes, which is not always an easy task when our children go in so many different directions. Once we set a day for our classes, the students will be expected to attend both Mass, SOCL classes and catechism regularly throughout the year. If they can do this, First Holy Communion will be administered on the second Sunday of June. The first reception of the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacred moment in any person's life. Our efforts in the months prior are designed to make a child's First Holy Communion the special beginning of a life-long relationship with Jesus through the mystery of the Mass and this sacrament.

SOCL SEMINAR

This year's diocesan School of Christian Living Seminar will be hosted by our sister parish in Central Falls, RI on Saturday, September 22nd. The theme of the Seminar is *TLC: Teaching Techniques, Lesson Plans and Curriculum*. Sessions will be offered to help our SOCL teachers prepare and teach their classes. Our presenters are: Lorraine Drazba, Cathy Taylor, Katherine Gnat and Jennifer (Zarek) Culhaine. The day begins with a prayer service at 10:00am so we will need to leave South Deerfield by

8:00am. We should be returning by 7:00pm. The \$10 registration fee will be covered by the parish for anyone associated with our SOCL program. A registration form is posted in the church hall.

SPOJNIA SUNDAY

On the fourth Sunday of September, the church observes Spojnia Sunday. Spojnia is the fraternal organization associated with our church. It was incorporated in 1908, 99 years ago. It has served the financial needs of our church's members for nearly a century. Spojnia offers car and home loans and has an extremely competitive credit union, as well. For more information, please call the home office in Scranton at 1-800-724-6352. All deposits are federally insured. And since Spojnia is a fraternal, all of its profits are reinvested in her members. This means that Spojnia over the years and still today is one of the largest contributors to our church funds from the youth through Waymart Manor, which is a home for the elderly that used to be known as Spojnia Manor. On September 23rd we will offer special prayers at Mass for our fraternal and all that it does for her members and our church.

ST. JUDE'S HOSPITAL

The parish has become a *Partner in Hope* with St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. We are receiving monthly stories and photos of the children we are helping. These materials have been placed on a special bulletin board in the parish hall for everyone to read. If you would like to make a contribution to this campaign, a collection-jug is located in the church vestibule. Any donation is appreciated from change on up. If you would like to make your donation by check, please make it payable to the parish with a clear note indicating the St. Jude's collection. Thank you.

C.I.F.

Renovations and improvements are a constant responsibility. Your donations to the Capital Improvement Fund help us to keep-up with these responsibilities: Thank you. We also wish to acknowledge the following recent contributions: Sandri Oil Companies, \$25, in memory of Helen Zidik; Joe & Peg Kostiuk, \$25, in memory of John Mietlicki; and Joe & Peg Kostiuk, \$25, in memory of Tal Fannin.

**If someone you know needs a hospital visit,
please notify the rectory.**